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## The State of South Carolina

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jo Anne Anderson

February 1, 2003

TO: Members, Education Oversight Committee

FROM: Jo Anne Anderson

RE: Report from the Division of Accountability

The Education Accountability Act of 1998 includes several provisions for reporting either to or from the Education Oversight Committee. §59-6-110 requires the Accountability Division to "examine the public education system to ensure that the system and its components and the EIA programs are functioning for the enhancement of student learning. The Division will recommend the repeal or modification of statutes, policies and rules that deter school improvement. The division must provide annually its findings and recommendations in a report to the Education Oversight Committee no later than February first. The division is to conduct in-depth studies on implementation, efficiency, and the effectiveness of academic improvement efforts and:

- (1) monitor and evaluate the implementation of the state standards and assessments;
- (2) oversee the development, establishment, implementation, and maintenance of the accountability systems;
- (3) monitor and evaluate the functioning of the public education system and its components, programs and policies, and practices and report annually its findings and recommendations in a report to the commission no later than February first of each year; and
- (4) Perform other studies and reviews as required by law."

The attached document is submitted in fulfillment of the February 1 reporting requirement. Findings are reported within the four categories outlined above with recommendations following the narrative.

Should you have questions, I am available at your convenience.

Attachment



**REPORT**

**to the**

**SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**From**

**The Division of Accountability  
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee**

**February 1, 2003**

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## Introduction

The Education Accountability Act of 1998 establishes a Division of Accountability within the Education Oversight Committee (EOC). The Division has been interpreted to be the staff of the EOC and, consistent with the outline of reporting provided in the Act, the Division of Accountability submits this report. The report frames progress toward the 2010 goal with data on student performance and results of several studies examining SC's progress toward the 2010 goal.

While SC schools, districts and state entities have maintained their commitment to high standards, we are experiencing both the success and frustrations of early implementation. The data presented in this report indicate that while we have made incremental improvements, the gains must be accelerated to be "one of the five fastest improving states in the country."

Each year Education Week publishes *Quality Counts*. This publication rates each of the states on a number of measures and identifies policies linked to gains. South Carolina rated very well in comparisons with other states earning the grades shown below.

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Standards and Accountability	B+	B
Improving Teacher Quality	B	B+
School Climate	not graded	D+
Resources: Adequacy	B-	B
Resources: Equity	C	C-

The Division of Accountability offers evidence and recommendations based upon our work over the last year. We hope you find it useful as you deliberate and fulfill the responsibilities of the EOC.

## The 2010 Goal and Academic Performance

### The 2010 Goal

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) established, with the concurrence of statewide education and community leaders, the following goal for the school improvement efforts in South Carolina:

By 2010, South Carolina's student achievement will be ranked in the top half of states nationally. To achieve this goal, we must become one of the five fastest improving systems in the country

Historically, South Carolina's school achievement has been ranked at or near the bottom in comparisons with other states. But the current ranking does not deter South Carolinians from their aspirations for the system. In a series of focus groups across South Carolina, the EOC learned that South Carolinians believe their schools should be held to national standards and, despite disparate achievement patterns, that all of South Carolina's students should be held to the same standards (Brown, 1999). This was reaffirmed in a survey administered in 2001 before the annual school and district report cards were published (Brown, 2002) and by teachers in a survey administered to teachers in late 2002 (Brown, 2003).

During the fall of 2000 the EOC organized a long-range planning team to identify the major elements of the educational system that should be addressed to meet the 2010 goal. The group, composed of twenty-two individuals representing the education, business and legislative communities, developed recommendations that were accepted as a working document by the EOC in July 2001. The long-range planning team also asked for greater detail on the measures to evaluate the 2010 goal. Those measures are discussed below:

- (1) South Carolina will rank in the top half of states on NAEP examinations and other international and national measures.

(a) Performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress: The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a federal project established in 1969. NAEP reports performance of American elementary and secondary students in several subject areas. Representative samples of students are tested every two years in the nation's public and private schools at grades four, eight and twelve. NAEP content area tests vary according to the year and include reading, mathematics, science, writing, history, geography and the arts. The South Carolina curriculum content standards, which form the foundation for the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT), incorporate the content assessed by the NAEP tests.

The sampling process ensures reliable state-level data. Approximately 2,500 students are tested per grade in each state. More than 120,000 students participate nationally.

NAEP scores are reported in two ways: scale scores and achievement levels (performance categories). The NAEP achievement levels are defined below:

<u>Basic</u>	This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade
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<u>Proficient</u>	This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter
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Advanced      This level signifies superior performance

NAEP results for South Carolina for 1996, 1998 and 2000 are shown in Table One below. Results from 2002 testing are not yet available.

Table One  
National Assessment of Educational Progress  
Comparison of SC and Other Jurisdictions Performance

NAEP Grade/Subject	Average Scale Score		National Ranking
4/Reading 1998	210	215	33 of 42
8/Reading 1998	255	261	33 of 39
4/Math 1996	213	222	41 of 47
4/Math 2000	220	226	30 of 46*
8/Math 1996	261	271	39 of 44
8/Math 2000	266	274	29 of 46**
4/Science 2000	141	148	35 of 38
8/Science 1996	139	148	30 of 45
8/Science 2000	142	149	34 of 38
8/Writing 1998	140	148	32 of 39

- TN, GA and NC scored the same as SC. \*\* GA scored the same as SC
- Source: National Assessment Governing Board 2001

A review of the performance suggests two findings: South Carolina is ranked low among states, but not at the very bottom and the distance between South Carolina's average scale scores and the national average is not insurmountable. Further analysis of the NAEP performance indicates little growth (since 1992) in the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient designation. Only 22 percent of SC fourth graders scored proficient or above on reading. In mathematics, SC also showed no gains from 1992. Only 12 and 14 percent of fourth and eighth graders respectively scored proficient or above. The national range extended from three to 31 percent for grade four and five to 34 percent for grade eight. SC's performance on the science assessment is also static.

(b) Performance on TIMSS & TIMSS-R: A sample of South Carolina students also participated in the Third International Math and Science Study (1995) and the Repeat Study (1999). SC scores are not available for 1995. Only thirteen states participated in TIMSS-R; South Carolina scored ninth among the thirteen as detailed below.

Table Two  
Third International Math and Science Study  
And  
Third International Math and Science Study-Repeat

TIMSS-R 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade, 1999	SC	US	International
Mathematics	502	502	487
Science	515	515	488

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2000.

(c) The Terra Nova: As a verification of South Carolina student performance relative to national performance, the General Assembly required that a sample of students be assessed using a nationally normed test. The sampling plan identifies students in three grades each year. The Terra Nova, a CTBS-McGraw Hill Test, is used for the national performance relationship. The test was administered in grades three, six, and nine in 1999; in grades five, eight, and eleven in 2000; and in grades four, seven, and ten in 2001 to a representative sample of approximately 7,500 students per grade level.

The Terra Nova is not aligned completely with the South Carolina curriculum content standards. Terra Nova is designed to measure concepts, processes, and skills taught throughout the nation. Test items are classified according to content categories that reflect educational objectives commonly found in state and district curriculum guides; in major textbooks, basal series, and instructional programs; and in national standards publications.

As a norm-referenced test, Terra Nova is used to gauge the performance of South Carolina students with respect to national performance levels. A student's score is interpreted in the framework of comparison to the scores of other students. For example, if a student scored at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, one would interpret that student's score as the same as or higher than 50 percent of the norm-group that took the same test. The items on Terra Nova are not tailored to fully assess South Carolina standards. An EOC study concluded that neither the match nor the coverage of the tests would provide sufficient evidence, across the board, to support decisions at the student, school, district, or state level relative to the South Carolina Content Standards.

Table Three  
Terra Nova Survey Testing Program  
1999, 2000, 2001

Grade	Reading			Language			Math			Total		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
3	44.7			48.5			49.8			49.1		
4			47.8			43.1			58.4			50.5
5		48.2			51.1			51.4			50	
6	43.1			41.4			42.1			41.6		
7			45.8			59.4			54.7			53.9
8		52.3			49.5			52.0			51.5	
9	45			44.3			43.7			42.2		
10			59.6			59.5			62.4			59.1
11		57.1			56.7			52.9			55.9	

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2001

- (2) Nine out of ten SC students will score at or above proficient on PACT, SC's standards-based criterion-referenced tests.

Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests: In 2000 the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) are administered to students in grades three through eight in two content areas. Testing in science is to be added in Spring 2003. Statewide performance indicates gains as displayed below:

Table Four  
PACT English Language Arts Performance  
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and above

Year	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
2001	41.6	37.3	27.4	32.0	28.0	23.6
2002	41.8	33.5	24.9	33.5	26.9	26.8

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2002

Table Five  
PACT Mathematics Performance  
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and above

Year	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
2001	33.3	26.0	27.1	26.4	25.2	18.4
2002	31.5	36.0	28.7	29.1	27.0	19.1

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2002

(3) SC will rank in the top half of states on the SAT and ACT.

(a) The SAT is one of the most widely recognized and publicized student assessments. Historically used for admissions information in private, selective colleges the SAT is used now by a majority of private and public colleges and universities. The test measures students' verbal and mathematical abilities and provides information on the students' preparation for college. The SAT is not administered to all students and the College Board (1988) advises that "using these scores in aggregate form as a single measure to rank or rate teachers, educational institutions, districts, or states is invalid because it does not include all students. . . in being incomplete, this use is inherently unfair." Trend data are published and disaggregated in a variety of ways.<sup>1</sup> The SAT is scored on a cumulative 1600 point scale (800 is the highest possible score for each component).

Table Six  
South Carolina and National Average SAT Scores  
1996-2002

Year	South Carolina			Nation		
	Verbal	Math	Composite Score	Verbal	Math	Composite Score
1996	480	474	954	505	508	1013
1997	479	474	953	505	511	1016
1998	478	473	951	505	512	1017
1999	479	475	954	505	511	1016
2000	484	482	966	505	514	1019
2001	486	489	975	506	514	1020
2002	488	493	981	504	516	1020

Source: The College Board, 2002.

Table Seven  
SAT Ranking of States With 40% or More of Students Participating (N=24 states)

Year	Verbal	Math	Composite
1998	24	24	24
1999	24	24	24
2000	24	24	24
2001	24	24	24
2002	23	22	22

South Carolina's recent state ranking is 49th among the fifty states. Performance among the twenty-four states with 40 percent or more of their students participating in SAT exams does not offer a more optimistic view of SC performance. In both verbal and mathematics performance SC has ranked near the bottom among the twenty-four states through 2002.

<sup>1</sup> Further information on the Scholastic Assessment Test can be obtained from the web site:  
<http://www.collegeboard.org/>.



(b) The American College Test (ACT): The ACT is an achievement test used by many colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The ACT includes four tests: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science Reasoning. Much like the cautions about interpretation of SAT performance, the reader is reminded that the ACT is a voluntary test administered to students paying a fee and is an inappropriate measure for the evaluation of teachers, programs, school and districts. The scale score for each subtest, as well as the composite, ranges from one to 36.

A comparison of SC student performance and student performance nationally is detailed in the table below.

Table Eight  
ACT Average Scores for Subject Area and Composite  
South Carolina and the Nation  
1995-96 to 2001-02

South Carolina

Year	# of students	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
1995-96	6,648	18.5	18.8	19.4	19.2	19.1
1996-97	4,994	18.1	18.9	19.1	19.0	18.9
1997-98	5,385	18.4	18.8	19.4	19.0	19.0
1998-99	6,766	18.6	19.0	19.3	19.2	19.1
1999-00	9,051	18.7	19.2	19.5	19.2	19.3
2000-01	NA	18.8	19.3	19.2	19.2	19.3
2001-02	NA	18.8	19.1	19.3	19.2	19.2

Nation

Year	# of students	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
1995-96	924,663	20.3	20.2	21.3	21.1	20.9
1996-97	959,301	20.3	20.6	21.3	21.1	21.0
1997-98	995,039	20.4	20.6	21.3	21.1	21.0
1998-99	1,019,053	20.5	20.7	21.4	21.0	21.0
1999-00	1,065,138	20.5	20.7	21.4	21.0	21.0
2000-01	NA	20.5	20.7	21.3	21.0	21.0
2001-02	NA	20.2	20.6	21.1	20.8	20.8

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2002 and American College Testing Program, 2002.

South Carolina increased both its mean composite score and the number of students taking the ACT between 1999 and 2001, although the composite fell very slightly in 2002. The state's scores continue to indicate inadequate preparation for college-level work. ACT advises that the cut-off scores indicating preparation for college level work are 22 for English; 24 for biology and 25 for chemistry; 23 for mathematics; and 22 for reading. ACT indicates that scores of 16-19 indicate "only minimal readiness" for college. South Carolina's students perform less well on the ACT than do students in all other states, except Mississippi.<sup>2</sup>

- (4) Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) passage rates will be at or above the national average.

Advanced Placement Passage Rate: The College Board administers the Advanced Placement (AP) Program. The program was introduced in the 1960s to permit qualified high school students to earn college credit while in high school. The curriculum, teacher training and assessments are aligned to ensure that the rigor and quality of the program is uniform across the nation.

<sup>2</sup> More information on the ACT can be obtained from the web site: <http://www.act.org/>.

Beginning with the 1984 Education Improvement Act, South Carolina's General Assembly has appropriated funds to pay exam fees for South Carolina students, to support the teacher institutes and to provide supplementary materials for the program. Approximately 90 percent of the nation's colleges and universities accept AP credits in some manner.<sup>3</sup>

Exams are scored on a one to five grading scale. Generally, higher education institutions accept scores of three or higher, although the more selective institutions require a four or a five score. The grading scale is shown below:

- 5= Extremely well qualified
- 4= Well qualified
- 3= Qualified
- 2= Possible qualified
- 1= No recommendations

Successful student performance on advanced placement tests rose dramatically between 1991 and 2002. The percentage of exams meeting the qualifying score continues to rise, nearing the national average. South Carolina also has increased participation rates at the same time performance has improved. The table below displays current participation and passage rates.

Table Nine  
Advanced Placement Exam Rates: Percentage of Exams Scored 3 or Above

Year		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number of Tests Taken in SC		13,139	13,896	14,177	14,994	14,894	14,560	15,703	16,614
Qualifying Percentage	SC	51	52	53	54	55	55	56	59
	Nation	61	62	63	63	62	62	60	61

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program also employs external exams to measure student performance. IB programs are offered in only a few SC high schools as the data below detail:

Table Ten  
Performance on International Baccalaureate Examinations  
SC and the Nation

Year	SC				Nation	
	# Schools Participating	# Candidates	# Exams Taken	% Qualifying	# Exams Taken	% Qualifying
1998	7	212	498	62	36,1089	79
1999	12	303	809	76	43,017	81
2000	9	290	750	77	50,745	81
2001						
2002	12	548	1296	71	NA	NA

- (5) SC's high school completion rate will be at or above the national average.

Table Eleven  
High School Graduation 2000

SC	National	SC Rankings
60%	67%	NA

Source: NCES, Digest of Educational Statistics, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> For additional information on the Advanced Placement Program, contact the web site: <http://www.collegeboard.org/>.

Table Twelve

<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment 1996-1997</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment 2000-01</b>	<b>Completion Rate</b>
50,304	33,131	65.9

Source: SC State Department of Education, Office of Research, 2002.  
NCES, Common Core of Data, 2002.

Table Thirteen

<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment 1996-97</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment 2000-01</b>	<b>#Students Getting GED</b>	<b>Completion Rate</b>
50,304	33,131	6,549	78.9

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2002.

- (6) SC's dropout rate will be in the lower half of states.

Dropout data are collected differently across the states making comparisons difficult. SC's State Department of Education uses a formula of dividing the number of dropouts for grades 9-12 by the total enrollment for grades 9-12. Using this methodology the annual dropout rates for the last several years follow:

1994-95	3.1
1995-96	2.9
1996-97	2.7
1997-98	2.7
1998-99	2.7
1999-2000	3.2

- (7) SC will be in the top half of states in percentage of students with disabilities earning a high school diploma.

These data are collected inconsistently across the states. Although a national comparison is not available, SC is working to establish consistent in-state collections.

Table Fourteen

Comparison of Percentage of Students with Disabilities Receiving High School Diplomas or Certificates in SC and the Nation

<b>Students with Disabilities in SC Ages 17-21</b>				<b>Percentage of students with disabilities receiving a diploma or certificate</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Number of Students</b>	<b>Number Receiving Diploma</b>	<b>Number Receiving Certificates</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>Nation</b>
1998	9,322	703	978	18.0	25.6
1999	7,045	1,083	1,094	31.0	NA
2000	7,380	1,033	986	27.4	NA
2001	7,522	1,120	1,106	30	NA

Source: SC State Department of Education 2001 (estimates only)

- (8) SC will be in the top half of states in freedom from drugs, weapons, violence and teacher victimization by students.

States collect data on different aspects of student behavior. Some data are reported through Federal Bureau of Investigation reports; others through the youth surveys and a variety of national agencies. The data shown below are taken from the SC School Crime Reports.

Table Fifteen  
Top Ten Crimes in SC Schools, 1998-2002

Crime	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Simple Assault	NA	3,489	3,504	3,972	3,851
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Disturbing Schools	2,690	2,051	2,051	2,649	2,605
Intimidation	539	1,017	1,017	1,005	867
Weapon Possession	970	996	860	875	813
Larceny/Theft	655	718	720	969	915
Vandalism	618	646	616	619	613
Aggravated Assault	596	724	412	369	441
Liquor Violations	265	202	233	194	NA
Burglary/B&E	363	320	230	215	NA

(9) The gap among achievements of students of different racial/ethnic groups and different economic status will be eliminated.

(a) Differences among the SAT performance of White, African-American and Hispanic students persist. There has been a slight increase in the achievement of African-American students in the last decade, while the improvement in achievement for white students has been more significant. The achievement gap between white and African-American students has not been narrowed and the gap between white and Hispanic students has fluctuated.

Table Sixteen  
SAT Verbal Performance by Ethnicity 1992-2002

Group	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
AA	410	410	409	415	419	415	414	415	415	420	418
Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	482	483	473	490	485	472
White	498	501	501	506	508	508	508	509	512	514	515

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2002

Table Seventeen  
SAT Math Performance by Ethnicity 1992-2002

Group	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
AA	411	415	409	412	412	407	407	407	414	421	421
Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	477	479	468	489	480	455
White	491	497	501	499	500	502	502	504	510	515	519

Note: Data by lunch status are not available. Source: SC State Department of Education, 2002

(b) The ACT includes four tests: English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning. Results are reported for all four tests and as a composite score. The range of scores for each ACT subtest, as well as the composite score, is from one to 36.

Table Eighteen  
ACT Performance by Ethnicity 1995-2002

Group	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
AA	17.3	17.13	16.8	17.1	17.2	17.2	16.5	16.2
Hispanic	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
White	21.4	21.7	21.3	21.3	21.4	21.3	20.9	21.0

Note: Data by lunch status are not available.

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2002

(c) Differences persist in both participation and performance on advanced placement tests.

Table Nineteen  
Percentage of Students Earning an Advanced Placement Score Qualifying for College Credit

Group	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
AA	26	26	28	21	24	24	17	25	23	26	32
Hispanic	64	55	69	60	69	55	55	60	58	59	61
White	59	57	59	55	55	58	60	60	60	61	62

Source: College Board, 2002

And finally, performance on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests.

Table Twenty  
Percentage of Students Scoring Basic and Above  
on Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests

Percent Group	ELA Proficient and Above Percentage	Math Proficient and Above Percentage
African-American	15.3	12.7
Hispanic	24.5	23.7
White	42.9	40.2
Free/Reduced Lunch	16.7	15.2
Pay Lunch	46.4	42.8

Can we achieve these goals? In a November 2001 survey administered to South Carolina educators and community leaders, South Carolina expressed confidence that the goals could be achieved. When asked specifically about the achievability and a time frame, the response pattern demonstrated high levels of confidence except for the elimination of achievement gaps among racial and socio-economic groups.<sup>4</sup> Despite general confidence in SC's ability to achieve the goals, many respondents cited inadequate funding, a fear that legislators are not committed fully and concerns for student motivation and parental involvement as major challenges.

Table Twenty-one  
Achievability of Specific Accountability Goals

Goal	Percentage of Respondents Indicating "Already Achieved"	Percentage of Respondents Indicating "Achievable in 1-5 years"	Percentage of Respondents Indicating "Achievable in 5-10 years"
High school completion rates at or above the national average	1	26	53
AP and IB passage rates at or above the national average	2	26	51
Rank in top half of states freed from drugs, weapons, violence and teacher victimization by students	6	32	40
Dropout rate in lower half of states	2	22	50
Rank in top half of states in % of students with disabilities earning a high school diploma	2	26	46
Rank in top half of states on NAEP exams	1	18	52
90 % of students will score at or above grade level on PACT	<1	16	49
Rank in top half of states on SAT/ACT	1	13	48
Eliminate achievement gaps among racial and socio-economic segments	1	8	30

Source: Brown, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, 2001

## **Implementation of State Standards and Assessments**

South Carolina's improvement effort is designed to ensure that South Carolina students achieve at competitive levels nationally and internationally. Throughout the 1990s South Carolina educators developed curriculum content standards which incorporate the recommendations of international and national organizations in the academic disciplines. A standards-based assessment system has been initiated to accompany the standards.

### Review of the Content Standards

A review of the 1998 English/Language Arts Standards, begun in January 2001 in accordance with Section 59-18-360 of the Education Accountability Act, was completed in May 2002 with the adoption of new English/Language Arts Standards by the State Board of Education. The new standards contain four strands: Reading, Writing, Communication and Research. Those strands are broken down into more specific topics and the new standards also indicate for teachers in which grade a concept is introduced and by which grade it should be mastered. These changes are in accordance with recommendations made by the various review committees.

Under Section 29-18-300 of the Education Accountability Act, a review of the high school physical science and biology benchmark course standards was completed in April 2002. While the proposed course standards were determined to be sufficient in many ways, several recommendations were made. The following recommendations were made: include the historical perspective in science for many standards; add a section on simple machines and a discussion on gravity to physical science; reduce the focus on cellular biology and include other topics in biology such as botany, zoology, and/or entomology in the biology course standards; and, revise the course standards to make all standards measurable.

Staff from the State Department of Education and the Education Oversight Committee developed "Standard Operating Procedures" for the process of reviewing existing standards and the future development of new course and content standards. The procedures relate to standards review and development under Sections 59-18-300, 320 and 360 of the Education Accountability Act in order to make the process more efficient. In addition, the procedures outline the order in which steps in the process will be conducted. The procedures will be followed in all future standards reviews and development.

### Utilization of the Standards in Instruction

The State Board of Education and the Education Oversight Committee have published curriculum content standards in four disciplines for use in SC classrooms. The disciplines are mathematics, reading/English language arts, science and social studies. These standards reflect what students should know and be able to do in kindergarten through grade twelve. Each set of standards has been reviewed by panels of national and state leaders in the content area to determine that SC students are taught a curriculum that enables them to compete successfully with students from around the world. In 2000 the Fordham Foundation reviewed content standards from the fifty states and rated SC's standards third in the nation, a rise from twenty-eighth in 1998.

To support implementation of the standards, the General Assembly appropriated additional monies for professional development: \$7 million for professional development on the standards, \$3 million for the Governor's Institute on Reading, \$3.2 million for Reading Recovery. These supplement \$3.0 million for Math/Science hubs, \$1.0 million for Principals Institute, \$52 million in technical assistance, \$6.4 million for the federal SC Reads Project and \$4.3 million in federal Eisenhower programs.

### Support for Parental Understanding of the Standards

Materials summarizing the mathematics, English language arts, science and social studies standards for parents were distributed to every district superintendent and school principal.

Through passage of the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act in 2000, the General Assembly established a framework for actions to increase and sustain parental involvement. The Act calls upon state, district and school leaders to heighten awareness of the importance of parents' involvement in the education of their children throughout their schooling; encourage the establishment and maintenance of parent-friendly school settings; and emphasize that when parents and schools work as partners, a child's academic success can best be assured.

The EOC's Public Awareness campaign has issued a series of announcements and materials to encourage parents to be involved with their children's education. A pamphlet, *Tips to Help Your Children Succeed in School* has been distributed to parents directly through schools and EOC presentations to community organizations throughout the state. Brochures in English and Spanish translations summarizing the mathematics, English language arts, science and social studies standards for parents were distributed to every district superintendent and school principals.

In addition, the EOC collaborated with several parent and community organizations to offer school and district report card information workshops for parent leaders and school advocates. Post analyses of parent responses to the first school and district report cards in 2001 revealed that while they reviewed their child's report card, they weren't sure what to do with the information or how to provide feedback to the schools. More than 200 parents and school advocates throughout the state attended the five regional Saturday morning workshops in August and September. Workshop participants were provided with information on the contents and purposes of the school report card and learned how they can use data and other report card information to drive positive school-community discussion and action focusing on ensuring all students achieve. In addition to information provided at the workshops, each participant was sent a new EOC publication, *Using Report Cards to Ensure Quality Schools: A Resource for Parents*, in November prior to the second annual statewide release of school and district report cards. The South Carolina PTA, South Carolina High Performance Partnerships, and South Carolina Communities worked as partners in this effort.

The EOC has continued to increase parental involvement in the public schools other means. First, among the requirements of the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act of 2002 (Act 402), the EOC is required to recognize businesses and employers who have adopted parent-friendly workplace policies and programs. In collaboration with the Governor's Office, the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the Office of First Steps, other state agencies, and several non-profit organizations, a Family Friendly Workplace Award program was implemented in 2002.

On January 30, 2002, the Governor presented Family Friendly Workplace Awards to seven employers: Beach First National Bank, Lang-Mekra North America, Carolina First Bank, Bank of America, Sisters of Charity/Providence Hospitals, Santee Cooper and the Berkeley County School District. For the 2003 awards the EOC has mailed application forms to 1,978 businesses throughout the state about the program. These businesses had registered for one or more workshops sponsored by the EOC. Awards will be made in the spring of 2003. Not only does the award reward employers who have promoted parent-friendly policies, but also the application form itself is an education tool to promote family-friendly policies that employers can implement. In turn, such policies allow parents who are employees to become more involved in their child's education.

Second, the EOC is required by Act 402 to survey parents to determine if state and local efforts are successful in increasing parental involvement in public schools. The Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina developed the parent survey. In addition to assessing parental involvement efforts in the state, the survey was designed to determine parent perceptions of public schools as required by the EAA. The survey was administered in the spring of 2002 and the summary results published on the 2002 annual report card. Upon receiving the actual responses to the survey from the Department of Education, the EOC will analyze the results of the survey. Also, the EOC will contract with an independent entity to design a model whereby principals and superintendents can use

the results of the parent survey along with the results of the teacher and student surveys to design effective parental involvement programs.

#### Implementation of Standards-Based Assessments

The State Department of Education has initiated the development of assessments to measure student learning of the content standards. According to the schedule published by the State Department of Education in August 2002, the implementation of the new assessments should be accomplished in the years noted below:

Table Twenty-two  
SDE Timeline for Implementation of New Assessments  
August 2002

Test	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
Readiness 1, 2				X					
PACT 1, 2		Deleted from EAA in 2001							
PACT 3-8 Math, ELA	X								
PACT 3-8 Science					X				
PACT 3-8 Social Studies					X				
PACT Exit Exam Math, ELA						X			
PACT Exit Exam Science						Not scheduled			
PACT Exit Exam Social Studies						Not scheduled			
End-of-Course Math					X				
End-of-Course, ELA						X			
End-of-Course Science						X			
End-of-Course, Social Studies									X
Alternate Assess.			X						

Source: State Department of Education, 2002.

#### Reviews of Standards-Based Assessments

Two assessments have come under review during this year: Algebra I/Math for the Technologies II end of course and PACT-Social Studies for grades 3-8. In addition, PACT Science for grades 3-8, which was reviewed in 2001-2002, was approved for use in spring 2003.

The Algebra I/Math for the Technologies II assessment is a multiple choice test, while the PACT Social Studies assessment contains both multiple choice and constructed response questions. Algebra I/Math for the Technologies II assessments are administered at the end of the course to students enrolled in Algebra I or Math for the Technologies II courses, and the results are to be reported to the schools in time for use in calculating students' course grades. Most students enrolled in Algebra I are in the eighth or ninth grades and most students enrolled in Math for the Technologies II are in the tenth grade, but students in grades seven through eleven may be enrolled in one of these courses. Students' scores on the Algebra I/Math for the Technologies II assessments will account for 20% of their final course grades. PACT Social Studies assessments are administered in the spring to students enrolled in grades three through eight, and the results will be reported to students and schools at the same time as PACT English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.



Each assessment is reviewed by panels of state and national educators with experience in the relevant fields. The process for review provides for EOC review and recommendations following the first field test, a response to those recommendations from the State Department of Education (SDE), and review and eventual consent from the EOC prior to administration. Following its review and the response to its recommendations by the SDE, the EOC approved the Algebra I/Math for the Technologies assessments for administration, with the expectation that all students to whom the assessment is administered will have access to graphing calculators for instruction and assessment by 2004. At the time of this report, recommendations regarding PACT Social Studies have been forwarded to the State Department of Education for response.

#### Continuing Assessment Issues

The assessment program continues to be a source of discussion. Two related issues dominate the discussion: should the PACT assessments be diagnostic in nature (that is, structured to provide individual student information for use in designing instruction); and how can the assessments help us monitor and improve student learning of the academic standards?

The Accountability Division supports increases in the level of instructional information provided by the PACT tests. Based on discussions with SDE staff, modifying the PACT assessments to provide information at the individual standard level would require additional items per standard to avoid unacceptable levels of measurement error. According to SDE staff, enough additional items would be required that the assessments would be too cumbersome and time-consuming to administer. However, individual academic standards are grouped into strands which represent major components of an instructional area such as mathematics. The SDE assessment team is exploring ways in which strand level information can be aggregated reliably at the school and/or district level. This information can be used to modify and sharpen instruction. The information can be used to focus time, re-teaching activities, and resources. Teachers, working with students on a daily basis, should gather individual student diagnostic information from their analysis of student work and classroom assessments.

A committee of outside experts and school district representatives convened in November 2002 to study the school improvement rating methodology discussed the issue of diagnostic information at some length. They concluded that academic improvement has been less rapid than desired and that PACT at the present time provides educators inadequate information to improve student performance. The committee suggested several ways in which PACT information could be improved, including the release of items or test forms after use, providing additional information on the design and make-up of the PACT assessments, and providing information demonstrating the linkages between PACT performance, such as scale scores, and performance expectations in the state standards.

An additional issue identified by the improvement rating study group relates to the validity of the PACT assessments as a measure of growth and achievement levels. A similar issue was identified by a different committee composed of school district representatives and outside experts convened in August 2002 to provide recommendations regarding how best to study the quality and the alignment of the state tests with the standards. The observed relative lack of growth in PACT achievement among students as they progress from one grade level to the next may arise from several factors. Teachers may not be teaching and expecting students to learn the state standards. Or teachers may be teaching the standards and students are learning them, but the assessments may not be testing the standards being taught (the tests and the standards are not properly aligned). Or possibly the tests are assessing student background characteristics or other areas than the academic expectations for the grade level assessed.

The alignment reviews of the field tests and the upcoming cyclical reviews of the current PACT ELA and math tests are intended to address some of the validity concerns listed above. Based on the recommendations of the alignment study committee, EOC and SDE staff are engaged in developing a mutually agreed upon set of criteria for reviewing and evaluating test alignment. Evaluating and improving the quality of the state assessments is a major priority. However, little formal study has been

conducted of other issues which affect the validity of the assessment basis for the accountability system, especially of the degree and fidelity to which the standards are being taught in classrooms across South Carolina. At issue is the extent to which teachers understand and embrace the academic skills and content exemplified in the state standards, and the extent to which they are successful in helping students to learn them. Studies of the focus and instructional effectiveness of classroom activities across the State would provide information to help address the first validity issue above: are teachers effectively teaching the standards in ways consonant with expectations, especially as they are assessed?

### **Development, Establishment, Implementation and Maintenance of the Accountability System**

The Education Accountability Act of 1998 calls for "the acceptance of the responsibility for improving student performance and taking actions to improve classroom practice and school performance by the Governor, the General Assembly, the State Department of Education, colleges and universities, local school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community" (§59-18-900).

With respect to those actions required by the Education Accountability Act, the State has made progress by establishing the policies and guidelines for the program.

Table Twenty-three  
Implementation Status of Education Accountability Act Provisions for State Agencies

<b>Statutory Citation</b>	<b>Provision</b>	<b>Status</b>
59-18-300	Content Standards	Math, English, Science and Social Studies adopted
59-18-360	Cyclical Review of Standards	Mathematics completed in Sept. 2000, ELA completed in September 2001
59-18-310-370	Assessments	Math, English implemented in grades 3-8; science and social studies scheduled for implementation in grades 3-8 in Spring, 2003; Algebra I End-of-Course in Fall, 2002.
59-18-910	Levels of difficulty reports	Ongoing, with assessments as developed
59-18-340	Norm-referenced test	Terra Nova administered in 1999, 2000, and 2001; alignment study conducted in 2000; new RFP to be published in 2003
59-18-370	Longitudinal matched data	SDE developed for use in school ratings 2001
59-18-350	PSAT/PLAN offered to grade 10	Implemented in 1998
59-18-500	Academic Plans	Implemented in 1998
59-18-700	Instructional materials alignment	Incorporated into SDE adoption cycle
59-18-710	Revise accreditation criteria	Adopted by SBE in Fall 2000, returned to SDE from General Assembly for amendments
59-18-900	Annual report card	Report cards published in December 2001, November 2002
59-18-900	Criteria for performance ratings	Adopted by EOC in December 2000; reviewed in 2002
59-18-1100	Gold and Silver Awards criteria	Awards given in 2001 and 2002
59-18-1110	Flexibility Guidelines	Adopted by SBE in Fall 2000
59-18-1300	District Accountability Systems	Implemented in 1999
59-18-1500-1510	Intervention and Assistance	Continuing
59-18-1510	Criteria for review team	Established in Spring 1999
59-18-1520	Teacher specialists	Criteria set in 1998; implemented in 1999 in 73 schools or tiered assistance program implemented
59-18-1530	Principal specialists	Criteria set in 1999; implemented in 1999 in one school; evaluation underway
59-18-1540	Principal Mentoring program	Established and implemented in 1998
59-18-1550	Recertification credit	SDE establishes criteria
59-18-1560	Retraining Grants	Implemented in 1998, evaluated in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002
59-18-1560	Public School Assistance Fund (SBE)	Not established
59-18-1700	Public Awareness Campaign	Initiated in 1999
59-18-1900	Alternative Schools Grants	Implemented in 1998
59-18-1910	Homework Center Grants	Implemented in 1998
59-18-1920	Modified School Year Grant	Implemented in 1998 in 5 districts; discontinued because of lack

Statutory Citation	Provision	Status
		of applicants
59-18-1930	Professional Development Review	Completed in December 2000; related accountability legislation adopted in 2001
59-24-10	New Principal Assessment	Incorporated in SDE actions
59-24-30	Professional Development Plans for administrators	Under SDE development
59-24-50	Training with School Councils	Currently SICA provides training
59-24-80	Principal Induction Program	Implemented in 1998
59-6-100	EOC established	Implemented in 1998
59-6-110	Accountability Division established	Implemented in 1998
Section 10	Parent Involvement Task Force	Recommendations formed basis for Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act of 2000
Section 12	Class Size Study	SDE Study initiated in 11 districts; report completed in 2001

### The 2002 School Ratings

The school ratings for elementary, middle, and high schools are based on measures of student achievement at each school. The academic achievement results for each school are converted to numeric indices based on formulas listed in the 2001-2002 Accountability Manual. The test data used in the calculations come only from students who attended the school for most of the school year (e. g., only from students who were enrolled in the school on the 45<sup>th</sup> day of instruction). The PACT data are used to calculate the indices in the elementary and middle schools; current and longitudinal Exit Exam results and percentages eligible for the LIFE scholarships provide the basis for the high school indices. The ratings based on those indices are Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and Unsatisfactory. The rating terms are specified in the EAA.

Ratings were reported for each school. The Absolute performance rating describes the academic performance of students for the current school year. It is a descriptor of the level of the average academic achievement of students in the schools compared to the performance standards on the tests (e. g., Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced). In 2002, an Absolute rating of Excellent indicates that the average student performance on the PACT tests is between Basic and Proficient. An Unsatisfactory rating indicates that the average performance of students in the school is Below Basic. There is a penalty in the Absolute rating for exceeding a specified percentage of students scoring below Basic. Schools receiving Absolute ratings of Unsatisfactory must review and revise their strategic plans and undergo review by an external review team. Extra resources such as teacher specialists are made available to schools rated Unsatisfactory. Schools rated Below Average must also review and revise their strategic plans, and may request external review teams.

The Improvement rating reflects the average change in academic achievement for individual students in the school for the current year compared to their performance in the previous year. The Improvement indices in the elementary and middle schools are based on longitudinally matched student test data. An Excellent Improvement rating indicates that the school is making major progress toward the 2010 Goal. A school receiving an Unsatisfactory Improvement rating lost ground (experienced an achievement decline) over the school year. Absolute ratings and Improvement ratings are largely independent of each other. For example, a school receiving an Unsatisfactory absolute rating could be awarded an Excellent improvement rating if students made exceptional progress, but didn't achieve an average score above Basic.

Schools having absolute ratings of Excellent for two consecutive years receive special consideration when assigning the Improvement rating, since such schools may have such high achievement levels that it is difficult to maintain the high levels, let alone increase them; such schools automatically receive a Good Improvement rating, and may receive an Excellent rating if the students increased their achievement

compared to the previous year. A school's Improvement rating can be raised one level if the improvement index calculated for students belonging to historically underachieving groups (the target groups include students with non-speech disabilities, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and students eligible for free-or reduced-price lunch) exceed the level of improvement for all students by one standard deviation. The Improvement rating schedule is approved for three years only to allow for analysis of patterns of improvement.

The improvement rating review process began this Fall with the convening of a technical advisory group to review the data for 2001 and 2002 with the purpose of identifying any revisions needed. The advisory panel met in Columbia on November 25, 2002 to review and discuss the data related to the improvement ratings and to generate recommendations based on their review. The advisory panel consisted of four national experts in the areas of testing and accountability, three representatives from South Carolina school districts, and a representative from the SC Department of Education.

The advisory panel reviewed the improvement rating methodology; concerns about the improvement ratings raised by South Carolina educators; historical test data; and simulations of methodological changes to the calculation of the improvement ratings which have been suggested by various groups of educators. The panel's charge was to make recommendations regarding the improvement rating methodology. The panel focused on the improvement rating methodology for schools in which PACT is administered because of the concerns about the ratings for elementary and middle schools which have been raised by educators.

Concerns about the improvement rating methodology have included concerns about communicating the basis for the ratings and concerns about the perceived fairness of the methodology for computing the ratings. Problems with communication have centered on the differences between the absolute ratings, which provide a measure of the average performance status of all students tested at the end of the current school year, and the improvement ratings, which in the elementary and middle schools are based on the average change in test performance of the same students from the end of the previous year to the end of the current year. The longitudinal methodology required by statute for the improvement rating also depends on data from students for whom both pretest and posttest data are available, but matched pretest scores are not required for the absolute rating methodology. Since at present the pretest and posttest data for some students cannot be matched because of inconsistencies in the data, and since pretest data are not available for all grade levels (e. g., since there is no statewide test administered to students in grade 2, a pretest is not available for students in grade 3 who take the PACT test), the absolute and improvement ratings for a school may be based on data from different numbers of students.

Concerns about the perceived fairness of the improvement ratings have centered on the current methodology in which changes in weighted scores used to calculate the improvement rating index only occur when a student has improved or declined by a performance level (e. g., a student's pretest performance level of Basic must increase to Proficient or drop to Below Basic 2 on the posttest to result in a change in the improvement index). The perceived unfairness in this methodology is that a student may improve his or her performance on the posttest compared to the pretest, but not enough to achieve the next higher performance level and thus contribute to a positive gain index for the school. (Of course, a student may also regress in his or her achievement on the posttest compared to the pretest, but unless the posttest score is at a lower performance level than the pretest this change will also not be reflected in the school's improvement index, this time as a loss.) This concern is thus with the perceived lack of precision of the current improvement rating methodology to detect small achievement changes.

The advisory panel reviewed the historical PACT data to determine whether longitudinal progress in achievement had occurred which was not detected with the improvement rating methodology. While there were gains in the percentages of students attaining higher performance levels on the posttests in some grades, especially in mathematics, these were offset by drops in other areas, especially in English

language arts. The panel reviewed PACT technical data and concluded that the performance levels within each subject were set initially at similar levels across the grade levels, suggesting that the improvement rating methodology based on comparing percentages of students attaining higher performance levels over time was reasonably supported by the PACT test design. The panel noted that student performance on the PACT tests was lower at the upper grades than at the lower ones, that improvement in grades 4 and 5 in 2002 was lower than expected, and that improvement was noted between 2001 and 2002 in the percentages of students increasing their performance levels from Below Basic to Basic, but these improvements were offset by the increased percentages of students whose performance levels dropped from Proficient or Advanced to Basic.

The panel identified four general issues and made recommendations regarding each issue. The first issue identified was: With what precision is improvement measured? The panel made a recommendation suggesting how precision of the calculation could be enhanced. The second issue dealt with which students are included in the ratings. The panel made four recommendations in this area: 1) report the percentage of student data matched on the report card (Note: this information is currently scheduled to be reported beginning with the 2003 report cards); 2) establish a consistent and unique student ID system to improve the accuracy and completeness of the matched student data; 3) study the effects of transience on student achievement in South Carolina; 4) include data only from students who attended the same school or district for both the pretest and posttest years.

The third issue was: What information about the improvement ratings should be published to improve communication and understanding? The panel made two recommendations in this area dealing with providing more information to schools regarding the calculated ratings indices and the specific student data used for those calculations.

Finally, the fourth issue dealt with how improvement can be facilitated. The panel made two recommendations:

- The State Department of Education should provide more information to educators to help them evaluate and target their instruction and curriculum so that students receive the maximum benefit from instruction and are able to increase their achievement levels to the levels needed if South Carolina is to improve its educational system. This effort to improve the information provided by the assessment system should be given top priority.
- The validity of the PACT tests for measuring growth and achievement levels should be studied and recommendations made for improvement where needed.

The panel's report is currently undergoing public review for comment. The EOC is expected to review the panel's recommendations and public comments in February, 2003.

Ratings were awarded to each school organizational unit: elementary, middle, or high. A school which had grades Kindergarten through 8 received two sets of ratings (and two sets of report cards). One set of ratings pertained to the elementary grades in the school (PACT test results in grades 3 through 5), and the other set of ratings were based on the middle school grades (PACT results from grades 6 through 8). Primary level schools which did not contain PACT-tested grades (such as a school having Kindergarten through grade 2) and career and vocational centers also received ratings based on different sets of criteria. Some schools, such as new schools, did not receive ratings.

The frequencies of ratings reported for all primary, elementary, middle, and high schools in South Carolina are listed in the tables that follow.

Table Twenty-four  
ALL SCHOOLS (K-2 PRIMARY, ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOLS)  
2001-2002 School Report Card Ratings  
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	223 (19.2)	120 (10.4)
Good	368 (31.8)	217 (18.7)
Average	310 (26.7)	192 (16.6)
Below Average	170 (14.7)	310 (26.7)
Unsatisfactory	60 (5.2)	288 (24.8)
New/Special - No Rating	28 (2.4)	32 (2.8)
Total	1159 (100.0)	1159 (100.0)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Elementary, Middle, High).

\*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 1, 2002.

Slightly more than half (591, or 51.0%) of the schools received Absolute ratings of Good or Excellent, while approximately one-fifth (230 schools, or 19.8%) were rated Below Average or Unsatisfactory. None of the schools received a penalty (lowering their Absolute ratings one level) because their percentage of students scoring below Basic exceeded the criteria. The results for the Improvement ratings were less positive, however. Somewhat more than one-fourth (29.1%, or 337 schools) had Good or Excellent Improvement ratings, and slightly more than half (51.6%, or 598 schools) either did not improve or had declining achievement (e. g., Improvement ratings of Below Average or Unsatisfactory). In order to reach the 2010 goal, the expectations for school achievement increase annually beginning in 2004, so that by 2009 the average achievement needed to attain an Excellent Absolute rating is Proficient. For most schools, achievement must increase each year to reach the 2010 goal.

Many schools having high proportions of historically underachieving students exhibited achievement improvements over the two-year period. For example, of 134 schools with 90 percent or more students identified as living in poverty, 21 earned a Good or Excellent Improvement rating. The preliminary analyses indicate that at least 126 schools were awarded a higher Improvement rating because of exceptional improvement by their historically underachieving students.

One measure of the validity of the rating system is to compare its results to ratings from other groups. The national Blue Ribbon Schools Award system identifies schools of quality based on several measures in addition to student achievement. The South Carolina accountability ratings are based solely on student achievement, so the two awards systems are not directly comparable. However, one would expect that schools of high quality would have a similar pattern of ratings from both systems. The school ratings for schools which have received Blue Ribbon awards during the time period the South Carolina ratings were calculated are listed in Table Twenty-five. All eleven schools received Absolute ratings of Good or Excellent in 2000-2001; eleven of twelve schools received Good or Excellent ratings in 2001-2002. Six of the schools were unable to increase their achievement during the 2001-2002 school year, however.

Table Twenty-five

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL	Year of Award	Absolute Performance Rating		Improvement Rating	
		2001	2002	2001	2002
Reidville Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Rice Creek Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Good	Good	Below Average
Satchel Ford Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Forestbrook Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL	Year of Award	Absolute Performance Rating		Improvement Rating	
		2001	2002	2001	2002
Mitchell Road Elem	2000-01	Good	Good	Unsatisfactory	Below Average
Oakview Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good
Woodland Heights Elem	2000-01	Good	Good	Below Average	Unsatisfactory
RP DawkinsMiddle	1999-2000	Good	Good	Below Average	Below Average
Hand Middle	1999-2000	Good	Good	Average	Below Average
Pickens Middle	1999-2000	Good	Average	Below Average	Below Average
TL Hanna High	1999-2000	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good
Academy of Arts, Science and Technology (Horry)	2001-02	NA	Excellent	NA	Excellent

The ratings results for each school organizational level are presented in tables Twenty-six through Twenty-nine.

Table Twenty-six  
K-2 PRIMARY SCHOOLS ONLY (GRADE 2 IS HIGHEST GRADE LEVEL)  
2001-02 School Report Card Ratings  
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	22 (100)	8 (40)
Good		12 (60)
Average		
Below Average		
Unsatisfactory		
New/Special - No Rating		2
Total	22 (100)	22 (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

\*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 2002.

Table Twenty-seven  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ONLY  
2001-2002 School Report Card Ratings  
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	106 (17.5)	37 (6.1)
Good	217 (35.8)	120 (19.8)
Average	195 (32.2)	104 (17.2)
Below Average	81 (13.4)	159 (26.2)
Unsatisfactory	7 (1.2)	186 (30.7)
New/Special - No Rating	7	7
Total	606 (100)	606 (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Elementary, Middle, High).

\*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 2002.



- Elementary schools earning an Excellent Absolute rating had an average of 10.7 percent of students scoring Below Basic; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Absolute rating had an average of 58.7 percent of students scoring Below Basic.
- Elementary schools earning an Excellent Absolute rating had an average poverty index of 35.9 percent; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Absolute rating had an average poverty index of 93.8 percent.
- Elementary schools earning an Excellent Improvement rating had an average of 22.7 percent of students scoring Below Basic; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Improvement rating had an average of 29.7 percent of students scoring Below Basic.
- Elementary schools earning an Excellent Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 68.1 percent; schools earning a Good Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 46.6 percent; schools earning an Average Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 71.6 percent; schools earning an Improvement rating of Below Average had an average poverty index of 69.4 percent; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 70.5 percent.

Table Twenty-eight  
MIDDLE SCHOOLS ONLY  
2001-02 School Report Card Ratings  
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	14 (5.1)	8 (2.9)
Good	73 (26.6)	32 (11.7)
Average	91 (33.2)	78 (28.5)
Below Average	70 (25.6)	107 (39.1)
Unsatisfactory	26 (9.5)	49 (17.9)
New/Special – No Rating	11	11
Total	274 (100)	274 (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Elementary, Middle, High).

\*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 2002.

- Middle schools earning an Excellent Absolute rating had an average of 10.6 percent of students scoring Below Basic; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Absolute rating had an average of 61.7 percent of students scoring Below Basic.
- Middle schools earning an Excellent Absolute rating had an average poverty index of 21.9 percent; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Absolute rating had an average poverty index of 88.3 percent.
- Middle schools earning an Excellent Improvement rating had an average of 22.7 percent of students scoring Below Basic; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Improvement rating had an average of 39.5 percent of students scoring Below Basic.
- Middle schools earning an Excellent Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 52.1 percent; schools earning a Good Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 58.4 percent; schools earning an Average Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 65.4 percent; schools earning an Improvement rating of Below Average had an average poverty index of 60.1 percent; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 59.2 percent.

Table Twenty-nine  
HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY  
2001-2002 School Report Card Ratings  
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	49 (25.9)	41 (21.9)
Good	70 (37.0)	43 (23.0)
Average	24 (12.7)	10 (5.4)
Below Average	19 (10.1)	42 (22.5)
Unsatisfactory	27 (14.3)	51 (27.3)
New/Special - No Rating	10	12
TOTAL	189 (100)	187 (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Elementary, Middle, High).

\*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 2002.

- High schools earning an Excellent Absolute rating had an average poverty index of 29.8 percent; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Absolute rating had an average poverty index of 79.8 percent.
- High schools earning an Excellent Improvement rating had an average of poverty index of 45.0 percent; schools earning a Good Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 42.4 percent; schools earning an Average Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 62.7 percent; schools earning an Improvement rating of Below Average had an average poverty index of 52.8 percent; schools earning an Unsatisfactory Improvement rating had an average poverty index of 59.0 percent.

Table Thirty  
DISTRICTS ONLY  
2001-2002 District Report Card Ratings  
Number and Percentage of District Report Cards

Rating	Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	3 (3.5)	1 (1.2)
Good	27 (31.8)	3 (3.6)
Average	33 (38.8)	27 (32.1)
Below Average	20 (23.5)	46 (54.8)
Unsatisfactory	2 (2.4)	7 (8.3)
Total	85 (100)	84 (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

\*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 2002.

- Three districts were rated Excellent (Anderson 1, Lexington Five, and York Four).
- Two districts were rated Unsatisfactory (Hampton Two and Jasper).

#### The relationship between performance and the characteristics of the school districts

The relationship between district performance and selected district characteristics was explored in a study of district organization conducted by Miley and Associates for the EOC. The study and recommendations are cited later in this report. A number of findings are relevant for discussion at this point: (1) by examining the characteristics based on enrollment we see that those districts with good to excellent report card districts averaged about 10,000 students. There is a big drop in average enrollment from

8,000 to 3,100 between average and below average school districts. The districts with the worst grades averaged only 2,100 students and had a single high school.

Table Thirty-one  
The relationship between district performance and enrollment measures

DISTRICT GRADE	Enrollment	ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT	MIDDLE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOLS
EXCELLENT	9955.0	626.0	783.0	1470.5	6.5	3.0	2.0
GOOD	11065.3	562.5	663.3	1113.7	9.3	3.9	2.8
AVERAGE	8061.4	507.7	590.7	881.1	8.0	3.6	2.6
BELOW AVERAGE	3183.4	468.1	448.5	658.7	3.6	2.0	1.5
UNSATISFACTORY	2108.0	552.8	455.3	609.8	2.3	1.5	1.0

Data in Table Thirty-two examines the general characteristics of the teachers and student/teacher ratios. The most striking generalization is the differences in the teacher salaries and the proportion of teachers with master's degrees. More than 50% of the teachers in the districts that received an excellent grade have masters degrees and they pay their teachers more than \$5,000 a year more than the districts with failing grades. There appears to be a consistent trend in terms of the relationship between teacher salaries and the proportion of teachers with master's degrees and performance. Table Thirty-three suggests that those good districts are willing to pay higher salaries and recruit teachers with master's degrees. The poorer districts are not able to recruit the same quality of teachers. This suggests that there may be a need to provide additional incentives to overcome this gap – or there will never be any equalization of opportunity for all students.

Table Thirty-two  
Characteristics of teachers in relationship to performance of districts

District Grade	% Parent Attending Conferences	Drop Out Rate	Student Teacher Ratio	% Masters	Ave Teacher Salary
EXCELLENT	76.80%	1.9000	21.8500	50.3500	\$39,408
GOOD	80.24%	2.4846	20.7615	44.0500	\$38,786
AVERAGE	80.12%	3.1324	19.3235	39.0719	\$36,503
BELOW AVERAGE	72.33%	3.9150	18.3250	33.6368	\$36,008
UNSATISFACTORY	60.45%	3.0500	18.4000	27.6750	\$34,210

The relationship between the geographical characteristics of the districts and performance offers some understanding. The density was calculated as the number of students per square mile of the district. "The figures suggest that there is a direct relationship between density and performance. The two excellent districts have densities of over 90 students per square mile while the poorest performing districts have average densities of only 7.7. This density measure is a good indicator of the nature of the geographic characteristics of a district. High densities are found in compact suburban districts, while low densities are an indication of sparsely populated rural areas. It is also interesting to note that "good" districts have densities of only about 50% of the excellent ones. Therefore the geographic factors may play a major role in defining the characteristics of the very best districts. The lower densities are also directly related to higher per student transportation costs. These costs suggest that the students spend more time in buses that probably hurts performance. It is also important to note the difference between the change in enrollment over the past decade and performance. Excellent districts experienced massive enrollment increases during the last decade. The districts with excellent grades also grew faster than the rate of total population within the district. This suggests that demographic migration shifts from inner neighborhoods and the general suburban growth trend. This might be characterized as "white flight". (Miley and Associates, 2003).

Table Thirty-three  
Geographic characteristics in relationship to performance of districts

District Grade	Enrollment	Student Density Students/ Sq. Mile	Square Miles	Transportation Per Student	Net Change in Enrollment 1990 - 2000	% Change in Enrollment	% Population Change
EXCELLENT	9955.0000	93.2300	107.1	\$138	2501.0000	45.22%	38.54
GOOD	11065.2692	47.0615	281.0	\$147	1379.8846	13.11%	17.52
AVERAGE	8061.3529	22.6526	420.1	\$148	-148.7647	-1.56%	14.21
BELOW AVERAGE	3183.4000	9.6350	369.8	\$181	-338.0500	-9.91%	5.99
UNSATISFACTORY	2108.0000	7.7175	354.0	\$185	-254.2500	-10.76%	17.65

These data suggest that the quality of the schools in a district is an indicator of where the population of the South Carolina desires to live and the potential support for public schools. It also suggests that enrollment in many districts has declined significantly over that past decade.

Table Thirty-four provides a clear notion that the local government's ability to support public education directly impacts performance. Most striking is the fact that the districts with below average and unsatisfactory grades are not able to provide the financial resources necessary to support a viable public school system. In general, the poorly performing districts make effort but simply do not have sufficient financial resources.

Table Thirty-four  
Financial characteristics of districts in relationship to district performance

District Grade	Mill Value	Ability to Pay	Tax Effort	% Local Budget	Ave Teacher Salary
EXCELLENT	\$175,244	0.0137	1.1495	41.00%	\$39,408
GOOD	\$215,857	0.0179	1.1198	39.62%	\$38,786
AVERAGE	\$151,743	0.0125	1.0949	30.76%	\$36,503
BELOW AVERAGE	\$43,106	0.0038	1.2119	31.25%	\$36,008
UNSATISFACTORY	\$22,677	0.0019	1.0522	25.00%	\$34,210

Miley and Associates also conducted an in-depth analysis of the expenditures of schools districts and the relationship to performance. The proportion of the budget spent on different categories, shown on Table Thirty-six provide very strong evidence of the importance of direct expenditures on instruction and more directly on teacher salaries. Those districts that performed at the excellent rating were able to devote 60% of their budget to instruction, while those that performed the worst were able to spend less than 55%. The relationship is directly explained by the fact that the best districts have about 10,000 students living in densely populated parts of the State. The worst performing districts had only about 2,100 students that came from areas with a density of only 7.7 students per square mile. The small districts with smaller student teacher ratios appear to be inefficient. They have disproportionately high expenditures for the fixed costs associated with leadership and operations. Another way to look at the same figures is to calculate them on a per student basis (Table Thirty-seven). As with the proportion of the budget spent in different categories the cost per student also demonstrates the inefficiency of small districts in sparsely populated parts of the state. Even though the unsatisfactory districts are spending almost \$1,200 per student more than the excellent districts the results are terrible. They are spending too much on fixed costs for leadership and operational costs and not enough on teacher's salaries and hiring better-qualified teachers with master's degrees." (Miley and Associates, 2003)

Table Thirty-five  
District proportion of budget expenditures for different categories by performance

Percentage of District Expenditures					
RATING	INSTRUCTIONAL	TEACHERS	LEADERSHIP	OPERATIONAL	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT
Excellent	60.26%	54.20%	6.98%	19.50%	13.26%
Good	59.17%	52.35%	8.37%	19.49%	12.90%
Average	58.36%	50.24%	9.26%	19.39%	12.92%
Below Avg	55.38%	48.32%	10.73%	21.21%	12.67%
Unsatisfactory	54.38%	34.88%	10.36%	21.71%	13.54%

Table Thirty-six  
Per student district expenditures in relationship to performance

Expenditures Per Student					
RATING	TOTAL	INSTRUCTIONAL	LEADERSHIP	OPERATIONAL	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT
Excellent	\$6,875	\$4,141	\$481	\$1,338	\$916
Good	\$6,977	\$4,114	\$584	\$1,367	\$907
Average	\$7,007	\$4,085	\$650	\$1,361	\$906
Below Avg	\$8,014	\$4,398	\$873	\$1,720	\$1,021
Unsatisfactory	\$8,005	\$4,351	\$833	\$1,735	\$1,086

#### Technical Assistance to Underperforming Schools

Section 59-18-1500 of the Education Accountability Act of 1998 outlines the technical assistance programs that will be provided to unsatisfactory and below average schools. Each unsatisfactory school will receive, and each below average school can request these programs. The specific programs include external review teams, retraining grants, homework centers, teacher specialists on site, and principal specialists.

During the 2001-2002 school year, the state served 256 schools in 55 school districts. These schools were identified on the basis of receiving either an "Unsatisfactory" or "Below Average" rating on the 2001 school report card issued in December 2001.

During the spring of 2001, the State Department of Education developed a plan to implement technical assistance at the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year in anticipation of the release of the first school report cards. In the process of developing the plan, it became apparent that the shortage of teacher specialists would prevent full implementation of the technical assistance components in EAA. The SDE established a tier system, with schools whose absolute score was less than 1.9 classified as Tier 1 schools, schools scoring 1.9 and 2.0 were listed as Tier 2 schools, and schools scoring 2.1 as Tier 3 schools. The SDE system also established two new technical assistance positions – curriculum specialists and lead principals. Tier 1 schools would receive curriculum specialists and lead principals in addition to the other technical assistance programs. Tier 2 and Tier 3 schools would be served by curriculum specialists operating out of the hubs.

Implementation of the plan began with the 2001 school year. Schools expected to be unsatisfactory received homework centers, funded by grants of \$25,000 per school. The grants are provided through the Office of School Safety and pay for transportation of students, teacher salaries and other operating expenses. The goal of the program is to provide students in need of additional time at school with after-school instruction.

During the fall semester, identified schools receive a visit by an external review. The review teams for Tier 1 and Tier 2 schools were conducted by teams of three educators, business leaders, and community

leaders. Tier three schools received review teams staffed by SDE personnel. The review teams met with school personnel, community leaders, parents and school district leaders and reviewed all aspects of the school and submitted a report to the State Board of Education outlining the needs of the schools. The report is then used to revise the school's School Renewal Plan to address the deficiencies noted at the school.

As a direct result of the report provided by the review team and other research conducted by school personnel, the school develops a plan for professional development for school personnel. The plan is submitted to the SDE for approval, and the activities approved by the SDE are funded through retraining grants. During the 2001-2002 school year unsatisfactory schools received \$500 for each certificated person on staff, and below average schools received \$330 for each certificated person on staff. The average cost of the retraining grant per school is \$36,000. The retraining grants are to be expended on activities that should lead to long term changes at the school in a number of areas, including school climate, instruction, curriculum development, and strategic planning. The Accountability Division each year carries out a review of the effectiveness of each school's retraining grant program.

Teacher specialists on site are provided as part of the technical assistance program. The teacher specialists help teachers with instruction and offer professional development on an as needed basis. Teacher specialists conduct model lessons, assist with planning, and give assistance with development of classroom activities. Each elementary school is eligible for one teacher specialist per grade at the school. Middle and high schools are eligible for a teacher specialist in each of the four core subject areas.

The principal specialist program is the least used of the assistance programs. The average cost of a principal specialist is \$124,790. For 2001-2002, there were two principal specialists and for 2002-2003, eight principal specialists were assigned.

There are a total of 347 employed personnel providing technical assistance in 174 schools in the state during the 2002-03 school year.

<b>Titles:</b>	<b>Total Number Employed</b>
Principal Leaders	9
Principal Specialists	8
Principal Mentors	13
Curriculum and Instructional Facilitators	73
Curriculum Specialists	41
Teacher Specialists	203

Each year the EOC evaluates the retraining grants given to schools identified as Below Average or Unsatisfactory. Generally, the schools have had insufficient time to institutionalize the new learning; however, few of the schools provided teachers with time for feedback and practice (a finding similar to that found in the statewide professional development study). Confounding success of the retraining grants and the consistent implementation of new knowledge and skills are the principal and teacher turnover rates. Over half of the schools served in 1998-1999 had different principals in 1999-2000. Teacher turnover rates hovered near 30 percent in many of the lowest performing schools. Instability negatively impacts the long-range plans of the school and progress in student achievement. Teacher turnover also lessens the effectiveness of the Retraining Grant program because teachers are not able to apply the knowledge they gain through the professional development activities before moving to another school to teach.

#### Gaps in Technical Assistance

There are gaps in the technical assistance model defined under the EAA. If the improvement strategies are limited to those specifically provided in the EAA, then there are no strategies to address the full structure of decision-making at the district level. Improving the quality of board and central

administrative decision making is omitted from the statutory menu of improvement strategies. Systemic change requires that the entire system be addressed. The technical assistance model also relies heavily on teacher specialists assigned to each school. In a period of teacher shortages statewide, the State Department of Education may have difficulty placing significant number of teacher specialists without creating problems in other SC schools. Alternative, but equally effective, strategies may be necessary in selected settings.

South Carolina's financial investment in technical assistance exceeds the other 27 states that provide technical assistance for underperforming schools. Technical assistance in South Carolina is very prescriptive, with little flexibility in how schools can spend the money provided, and far more emphasis is placed on identifying and correcting underperforming schools than rewarding schools that are doing well and/or improving. In addition, none of the money appropriated for technical assistance can be spent on instructional materials that may be lacking in the underperforming schools.

Can change be sustained? As shown in the list below, 39 schools have received *unsatisfactory* absolute ratings in both 2001 and 2002. Only one of these schools is an elementary school. That may suggest that our efforts to intervene early are working. There are 88 schools that were rated *Unsatisfactory* (on the absolute rating) in either 2001 or 2002. The schools are shown in Appendix A. Of the 68 schools with *unsatisfactory* absolute ratings in 2001, only two were rated above *Below Average* in 2002. Of the 59 schools with *unsatisfactory* absolute ratings in 2002, only five were rated above *Below Average* in 2001.

Table Thirty-seven  
Schools with Unsatisfactory Absolute Ratings in 2002 and 2001

District	School	Report Card School	2002 Absolute	2001 Absolute
		Level	Rating	Rating
Allendale	Allendale-Fairfax Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Allendale	Allendale-Fairfax High	HIGH	U	U
Bamberg 2	Denmark-Olar High	HIGH	U	U
Beaufort	Whale Branch Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Charleston	M R Rivers Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Charleston	Brentwood Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Charleston	Baptist Hill High	HIGH	U	U
Charleston	Burke High	HIGH	U	U
Charleston	Lincoln High	HIGH	U	U
Charleston	St. John's High	HIGH	U	U
Clarendon 1	Scotts Branch High	HIGH	U	U
Colleton	Ruffin High	HIGH	U	U
Darlington	Spaulding Jr High	MIDDLE	U	U
Dillon 2	Dillon High	HIGH	U	U
Fairfield	Fairfield Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Florence 3	Lake City High	HIGH	U	U
Florence 4	Timmons Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Greenville	Tanglewood Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Greenville	Parker Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Hampton 2	Estill High	MIDDLE	U	U
Hampton 2	Estill Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Hampton 2	Estill High	HIGH	U	U
Jasper	West Hardeeville Elementary	ELEMENTARY	U	U
Jasper	West Hardeeville Elementary	MIDDLE	U	U
Jasper	Ridgeland Middle	MIDDLE	U	U

District	School	Report Card School	2002 Absolute	2001 Absolute
		Level	Rating	Rating
Jasper	Jasper County High	HIGH	U	U
Lee	Mount Pleasant Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Marion 7	Terrells Bay High	HIGH	U	U
Marlboro	Bennettsville Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Marlboro	Marlboro County High	HIGH	U	U
Orangeburg 3	Elloree High	MIDDLE	U	U
Orangeburg 3	Holly Hill-Roberts High	HIGH	U	U
Orangeburg 3	Elloree High	HIGH	U	U
Orangeburg 5	Bowman High	MIDDLE	U	U
Orangeburg 5	Bowman High	HIGH	U	U
Richland 1	Heyward Gibbes Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Richland 1	W A Perry Middle	MIDDLE	U	U
Richland 1	Eau Claire High	HIGH	U	U
Richland 1	C A Johnson High	HIGH	U	U

The schools rated *Unsatisfactory* on the absolute rating in 2002 fall into 26 districts as shown in Table Thirty-eight (sorted by percentage of schools rated *Unsatisfactory* and then poverty index). The clustering suggests that there are some districts in which the problems to be solved go beyond the school level.

Table Thirty-eight  
District: Percent of Unsatisfactory Schools

District	Number of Schools in District	Poverty Index	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Absolute	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Improvement	Percent of Absolute Unsatisfactory	Percent of Improvement Unsatisfactory
Hampton 2	4	89.61	4	2	100.0	50.0
Jasper	5	82.99	4	2	80.0	40.0
Allendale	4	92.11	3	2	75.0	50.0
Florence 4	3	86.67	2	1	66.7	33.3
State Special	2		1	0	50.0	0.0
Clarendon 1	5	96.35	2	2	40.0	40.0
Orangeburg 3	8	89.43	3	5	37.5	62.5
Bamberg 2	3	95.05	1	1	33.3	33.3
Marion 7	6	94.63	2	1	33.3	16.7
Lee	7	90.66	2	3	28.6	42.9
Fairfield	7	84.03	2	3	28.6	42.9
Dorchester 4	4	79.83	1	0	25.0	0.0
Dillon 1	4	76.7	1	2	25.0	50.0
Marlboro	13	84	3	4	23.1	30.8
Orangeburg 5	16	85.15	3	4	18.8	25.0
Dillon 2	6	84.54	1	2	16.7	33.3
Abbeville	13	64.44	2	8	15.4	61.5
Florence 3	8	81.34	1	3	12.5	37.5
Chester	9	61.46	1	1	11.1	11.1
Richland 1	51	68.19	5	17	9.8	33.3
Charleston	78	60.7	7	19	9.0	24.4



District	Number of Schools in District	Poverty Index	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Absolute	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Improvement	Percent of Absolute Unsatisfactory	Percent of Improvement Unsatisfactory
Union	12	65.01	1	4	8.3	33.3
Colleton	14	77.48	1	2	7.1	14.3
Williamsburg	18	90.88	1	8	5.6	44.4
Darlington	21	70.96	1	1	4.8	4.8
Beaufort	25	53.55	1	5	4.0	20.0
Greenville	85	42.23	3	27	3.5	31.8
Barnwell 19	3	85.1	0	0	0.0	0.0
Calhoun	7	83.92	0	3	0.0	42.9
Marion 2	5	83.24	0	2	0.0	40.0
McCormick	4	82.12	0	0	0.0	0.0
Clarendon 2	6	79.56	0	0	0.0	0.0
Marion 1	4	78.8	0	1	0.0	25.0
Orangeburg 4	10	73.81	0	1	0.0	10.0
Sumter 2	16	73.59	0	6	0.0	37.5
Dillon 3	3	73.1	0	0	0.0	0.0
Bamberg 1	5	71.6	0	0	0.0	0.0
Hampton 1	7	69.2	0	2	0.0	28.6
Barnwell 29	3	69.02	0	0	0.0	0.0
Lexington 4	6	69	0	1	0.0	16.7
Laurens 56	7	67.91	0	0	0.0	0.0
Georgetown	17	67.05	0	4	0.0	23.5
Chesterfield	18	66.93	0	3	0.0	16.7
Spartanburg 7	16	66.91	0	4	0.0	25.0
Florence 2	3	66.87	0	0	0.0	0.0
Saluda	4	66.31	0	1	0.0	25.0
Sumter 17	11	65.02	0	4	0.0	36.4
Newberry	14	64.84	0	4	0.0	28.6
Clarendon 3	3	61.89	0	2	0.0	66.7
Barnwell 45	3	61.24	0	0	0.0	0.0
Laurens 55	12	60.78	0	2	0.0	16.7
Edgefield	7	60.77	0	1	0.0	14.3
Cherokee	17	60.6	0	6	0.0	35.3
Lexington 3	4	60.04	0	0	0.0	0.0
Horry	40	59.63	0	5	0.0	12.5
Anderson 3	4	59.4	0	2	0.0	50.0
Florence 1	19	59	0	5	0.0	26.3
Florence 5	3	57.86	0	1	0.0	33.3
Berkeley	35	57.82	0	15	0.0	42.9
Greenwood 51	4	57.8	0	2	0.0	50.0
Greenwood 50	14	56.03	0	2	0.0	14.3
Spartanburg 3	7	55.97	0	1	0.0	14.3
Lancaster	19	55.71	0	5	0.0	26.3
Lexington 2	16	54.43	0	3	0.0	18.8
Aiken	37	53.62	0	9	0.0	24.3
Kershaw	17	53.49	0	2	0.0	11.8
York 1	7	52.04	0	3	0.0	42.9

District	Number of Schools in District	Poverty Index	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Absolute	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Improvement	Percent of Absolute Unsatisfactory	Percent of Improvement Unsatisfactory
Oconee	20	51.15	0	1	0.0	5.0
Spartanburg 4	4	50.6	0	0	0.0	0.0
Anderson 5	14	50.38	0	6	0.0	42.9
Anderson 2	7	50.03	0	0	0.0	0.0
Anderson 4	5	49.03	0	1	0.0	20.0
Greenwood 52	3	47.56	0	1	0.0	33.3
Spartanburg 1	10	46.32	0	4	0.0	40.0
Spartanburg 5	8	45.9	0	3	0.0	37.5
Spartanburg 6	13	45.78	0	6	0.0	46.2
Pickens	24	41.74	0	4	0.0	16.7
Spartanburg 2	11	41.57	0	4	0.0	36.4
York 3	20	40.44	0	7	0.0	35.0
Dorchester 2	15	39.88	0	2	0.0	13.3
Richland 2	20	36.27	0	7	0.0	35.0
Anderson 1	13	35.54	0	2	0.0	15.4
York 2	8	35.25	0	2	0.0	25.0
Lexington 1	18	33.58	0	1	0.0	5.6
Lexington 5	17	21.92	0	1	0.0	5.9
York 4	9	18.26	0	3	0.0	33.3

#### Rewards for Exemplary Performance or Improvement

Based upon report card units, there were a total of 327 public schools, career centers and special state schools that received either a Palmetto Gold or Palmetto Silver recognition and monetary award in December 2002. (There were 330 school sites receiving awards.) These schools demonstrated high levels of academic achievement and high rates of student academic improvement as measured by the absolute and improvement ratings assigned to the schools on the 2002 annual report card. For Fiscal Year 2002-03, the General Assembly appropriated \$1.0 million in Lottery Funds to reward school receiving distinction as a Palmetto Gold or Palmetto Silver. Student enrollment, student attendance, teacher attendance, and dropout rates determined the financial award. The minimum award to a Palmetto Gold school was \$1,500 and the minimum for a Palmetto Silver school was \$1,000. All initial awards totaled \$924,103.

	Palmetto Gold		Palmetto Silver	
	No. of Recipients	Amount of Awards	No. of Recipients	Amount of Awards
Elementary	119	\$297,859	46	\$63,180
Middle	13	\$ 47,513	24	\$33,978
High	62	\$323,190	22	\$53,372
Career Centers	35	\$ 88,577	1	\$ 3,312
State Special Schools	4	\$ 12,122	1	\$ 1,000

## **The Functioning of the Public Education System**

In April 1999 the South Carolina Supreme Court declared that the SC Constitution included an affirmative duty to provide adequate schooling. The opinion of the Court provides that "The South Carolina Constitution's education clause required the General Assembly to provide the opportunity for each child to receive a minimally adequate education." The Court continued by defining a minimally adequate education required by the Constitution "to include providing students adequate and safe facilities in which they have the opportunity to acquire:

1. the ability to read, write and speak the English language, and knowledge of mathematics and physical science;
2. a fundamental knowledge of economic, social and political systems, and of history and governmental processes; and
3. academic and vocational skills."

Source: SC Supreme Court, 1999.

### Communication Strategies

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee continued its charge under the EAA to apprise the public of the status of public schools and the importance of high standards for academic performance for public school students. The public awareness campaign in 2002 incorporated the execution of communications strategies with three primary objectives:

1. emphasize the message of 2001, which is using the report card as a tool to promote improvement;
2. encourage parents and community leaders to take a second step and act on the report cards to encourage improvement; and
3. enhance understanding and impact of the accountability system by focusing on the 2010 goal.

The objectives were developed as a result of post analyses of public reaction to the release of the first school and district report cards through public opinion surveys and focus groups. Results revealed a disconnect between schools and general public to actively utilize report cards in the effort to improve our education system. The communications targeted four distinct audiences, business and community leadership, educators, parents, and the media through several strategies including speaking engagements and meetings, support/resource materials, and train-the-trainer workshops. The EOC embarked on a school and district report card education tour around the state, that included the following:

- *PowerPoint* presentations to 50 community civic and service organizations in 29 counties;
- Six regional Saturday morning workshops in August and September with more than 250 parent leaders on how they can utilize information on school report cards as tools for improvement;
- An information workshop in October with reporters and editors from print and broadcast media invited by the S.C. Press Association and the S.C. Broadcaster's Association; and
- Information briefings with the editorial boards from 13 South Carolina weekly and daily newspapers.

Other supporting activities included:

- The production of revised support and informational materials: *A Don't Fail Your Children: School and District Report Cards Communications Tool Kit* for educators and parent leaders to help them effectively promote and utilize information in the school and district report cards;

- The production of a series of video programs for educators with step-by-step information on how to calculate the Absolute and Improvement Ratings for schools and districts. The programs were broadcast to schools through SCETV's closed circuit television;
- The redesign of the EOC website to include Spanish-translated information and make it more user friendly;
- Publication of the booklet: *Using Report Cards to Ensure Quality Schools: A Resource for Parents*;
- Publication of a *Learning Matters* newsletter to summarize findings of EOC research projects and studies.

The EOC's work in the area of public awareness for 2003-2004 will focus on supporting and sustaining the state's progress made towards higher student achievement through effective accountability efforts. A long-range communications plan will be developed to strengthen the EOC's ongoing message encouraging communities to utilize school and district report cards as tools for improvement and to increase the level of parental, community and political engagement in and support of school improvement. In addition, The EOC's existing contract with Chernoff-Silver and Associates (now, cnsg, inc.) for communications services expires in May 2003. The EOC, working with the SC Materials Management Office, is advertising for Requests for Proposals to retain a public relations firm that will provide professional advice, design of and implementation of a master communications plan.

The 2003-2004 communications plan will also incorporate results provided in the statewide teacher opinion survey referenced earlier in this report to effectively reach teachers. The survey among pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers was conducted by MarketSearch Corporation to gauge general attitudes toward education accountability, the implementation process, involvement in education, and other related issues. In addition, the study provides general insight on their perceptions of the state's ability to achieve the 2010 goal.

Survey results identify a general feeling among teachers that educational improvements are being made and will continue. Teachers support accountability and feel they are doing their part in improving South Carolina's education system; however, many teachers are critical of the efforts of students, parents, and legislators. Finally, most teachers feel the goal of South Carolina's education system being ranked in the top half by 2010 is not realistic. These results reveal teachers often feel isolated and want to have a shared voice in decision making. There is a strong need to build collaborative relationships that emphasizes trust, teamwork and shared accountability between teachers and parents, students and citizens.

Survey results highlight several directives to incorporate into the EOC's public awareness plan:

- Expand knowledge and increase communications with teachers relating to successes under the Education Accountability Act.
- Provide tools for community leaders, parents, and legislators to increase their involvement with and support for teachers; and
- Increase visibility and focus on progress and methods for improving student achievement.

## **Other Studies and Reviews as Required by Law**

### Provisos 1.45 and 1A.48 of the General Appropriations Act

The provisos require the Education Oversight Committee and the State Department of Education to examine the compensation for teacher specialists. The portions of the provisos dealing with this topic read:

. . . Provided, further, that the Education Oversight Committee and the State Department of Education shall examine base and supplementary compensation for teacher specialists and those fulfilling similar responsibilities in other states to determine if adjustments in the compensation should be made to encourage teacher specialists to serve rural areas. Recommendations should be provided to the General Assembly by December 31, 2002.

Research was conducted during the fall of 2002 and recommendations were approved by the Education Oversight Committee at the December 2002 meeting. The findings of the report included: (1) vacancies in the Teacher Specialist on Site (TSOS) program are no more likely to be in rural or "isolated" school districts than in urban school districts; shortages in TSOS are as likely to be linked to school climate, the availability of housing, and the match between teacher specialist certification and school needs as the shortage is linked to rural/urban school settings; (2) Fifty school districts located throughout the state provided TSOS to the program in 2002-03 and teachers did relocate to serve schools in other districts; (3) no school district provided a disproportionate number of TSOS as compared to their workforce; and, (4) more flexibility is needed in the TSOS program in relation to the ability of TSOS applicants to select multiple grade levels or subject areas in the program and in selection of districts after someone has been chosen as a TSOS.

As a result of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- no additional compensation to attract TSOS to rural areas of the state is needed;
- vigorous recruitment of TSOS candidates must be conducted in all areas of the state, especially in the larger school districts and in the rural areas of the state;
- information on the TSOS program should be directed to the teachers themselves rather than through principals and superintendents;
- when teachers apply to become TSOS, they should apply for a range of grade levels on the elementary level, such as K-3, 3-5, etc., and on the middle school level, they should be able to apply for more than one subject, depending on their certification;
- when teachers are selected for the TSOS program, they should be able to select more than three districts in which they will serve, allowing more flexibility in the placement of TSOS without causing selected candidates to travel undue distances.

### Proviso 1.71 of the General Appropriations Act

The proviso requires the Education Oversight Committee to review the pilot program for the applied curriculum program for high school students at the greatest risk of dropping out. The proviso provides:

**1.71.** (SDE: Applied Curriculum Program) Of the funds authorized in Part IA, Section 1.V., Other Operating Expenses for the federal School-to-Work Program, the Department of Education, in cooperation with a local school district, must conduct a pilot of an applied curriculum program for high school students who are at the greatest risk of dropping out of school. The Education Oversight Committee shall review the pilot for consistency with State and Federal education goals, the potential to increase high school graduation rates and reduce the high school dropout rate, and the potential to increase student employability. The Education Oversight Committee shall report to the House Education and Public Works Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the State Board of Education annually for the duration of the pilot.

Research on the study has begun and the report on the first year of the pilot is expected in June 2003.

#### Teacher Loan Program

The Teacher Quality Act of 2000 requires the EOC to "review the [SC Teacher] loan program annually and report to the General Assembly" (§59-26-20 (j), SC Code of Laws of 1976, as amended.) The Teacher Loan Program is established within the Education Improvement Act of 1984. The program is intended to provide loans enabling qualified state residents to attend South Carolina public or private colleges and universities for the purpose of becoming certified teachers employed in areas of critical need. Critical need is defined as a critical geographic or certification area. A percentage of the loan is cancelled by fulfillment of the teaching requirement. The Teacher Loan Program is exemplary of programs offered in almost every state and is linked to similar efforts at the federal level. The SC Student Loan Corporation administers the Program.

The initial EOC review of the Teacher Loan Program (TLP) focused on four aspects of the program: (1) a description of the program; (2) a description of the applicant and recipient populations; (3) the utilization of repayment and cancellation options; and (4) the degree to which program participants are represented among current public school teachers. Findings of the report, released in June 2002, included: the Teacher Loan Program is fulfilling the statutory mission to attract individuals into the teaching profession and into areas of critical need; the Student Loan Corporation has managed the program and the assets of the program well; approximately half of the loan recipients teach at least a minimum number of years to repay the loans; the number of areas of critical need has increased since the inception of the program; the vast majority of loan recipients are white females; and the collection of and sharing of data among the various partners in the program could be improved.

Based on these findings several recommendations were made:

- communication and sharing of data among the various partners of the program should be improved;
- additional data on why individuals who receive the loans but do not teach is needed;
- vigorous recruitment of African-Americans and males into the program should be implemented;
- the impact on the program from South Carolina's multiple scholarship options should be studied;
- data on loan recipients teaching in rural critical needs schools versus urban critical should be collected and studied;
- the General Assembly should develop long range goals and objectives for the Teacher Loan Program.

Considering these recommendations, there are four study questions for the second annual report on the program: (1) How does the 2001-02 year compare to previous years? (2) Where geographically did the teachers whose loans were being canceled during the 2001-02 fiscal year teach and in what critical need subject areas? (3) What is the relationship between the TLP and the Life Scholarship Program? (4) How can the TLP contribute to the school improvement processes that are part of the Accountability System? The second annual report should be completed in June 2003.

#### Review and monitor the implementation and evaluation of the Education Accountability Act and Education Improvement Act programs

Two studies are underway at this time: the Child Development Program for Four-Year-Olds and the Teacher Specialist on Site Program.

(1) The Child Development Program for Four-Year-Olds is a two-year study of the child development program established in 1984 as a component of the Education Improvement Act. The study, conducted under contract by the University of South Carolina College of Education, is structured to describe the

program's critical components and the effectiveness of each component; examine professional preparation and development and, through intensive observation, determine the degree of program effectiveness. A final report is expected in June, 2003.

(2) The Teacher Specialist on Site Program is a core technical assistance strategy outlined in the Education Accountability Act. The EOC has initiated a three-year study of the program. The EOC staff worked with staff from the SC State Department of Education (SDE) to identify the following principal research question:

Does student achievement improve in schools assigned teacher specialists?

Five related questions also were identified:

- How has student achievement improved over time in schools assigned teacher specialists?
- Are there changes in the school community and/or culture during the years with teacher specialists?
- How has the teacher specialist program impacted upon the instructional skills and professional growth of the teachers involved?
- How has the program functioned over time?
- What are the unintended consequences of the teacher specialist program?

The EOC and SDE also worked with the University of South Carolina (USC) Education Policy Center on the evaluation. The USC Center assumed responsibility for a comprehensive survey.

Findings from the first year review are reported with focus on survey responses and academic achievement. The survey findings include the following:

- Principals, teacher specialists, and teachers expressed positive views about the TSOS program. Seventy-seven percent of the principals, 84% of the teacher specialists, and 71% of the teachers graded the program "A" or "B." A failing grade of "F" was assigned by 4 to 6% of the respondent groups.
- Sixty-nine percent of the teachers, 83% of the teacher specialists, and 94% of the principals agreed that the implementation of the program had gone smoothly.
- The school climate for the program was generally quite positive. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust seemed to exist in almost all schools. Seventy-five percent of the teachers and all but two of the principals reported that they enjoyed working with the teacher specialists.
- Despite the generally favorable climate for the program, only 46% of teachers and 56% of principals agreed that they felt "ownership" in the TSOS program.
- Sixty-five percent of the teachers, 88% of principals, and 95% of the teacher specialists agreed that the TSOS had "contributed greatly to the effectiveness of the instructional program at this school."
- Teachers most frequently mentioned that the TSOS program had resulted in improvements in instruction, teacher skills, the use of best practices, and the alignment of the curriculum to the state standards.

- Between 5% and 15% of the teachers were consistently negative about the TSOS program and the work of individual teacher specialists.

With respect to academic achievement, the following was found:

- 6 (55 %) of 11 schools in Tier 1 met or surpassed a 5% improvement threshold in one or more areas
- 29 (76 %) of 38 schools in Tier 2 met or surpassed a 5% improvement threshold in one or more areas
- 4 (33 %) of 12 schools in Tier 3 met or surpassed a 5% improvement threshold in one or more areas
- 4 (40%) of the 10 schools designated for teacher specialists, but not receiving them, met or surpassed the 5% improvement threshold in one or more areas (gains should be considered in light of other interventions)
- Schools tended to reduce the percentage of students scoring Below Basic more than raise the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced
- Only four of ten high schools met or surpassed the improvement threshold
- Only one school (Brockington Elementary) met or surpassed the threshold in all four areas

On school ratings

- 14 (23 %) of the 61 schools elevated their absolute rating
- 18 (30 %) of 61 schools elevated their improvement rating
- 7 (11 %) of 61 schools declined in their absolute rating
- 22 (36 %) declined in their improvement rating
- 4 (40%) of the 10 schools receiving alternate interventions improved one or more ratings
- 2 (20%) of 10 high schools elevated one rating

The schools all continue to struggle with the establishment of a stable staff. Although there were small improvements, these schools experience teacher turnover rates between 25 and 30 percent.

Formative Issues identified for student and discussion include the following:

1. Would a thorough and systematic definition of the treatment model(s), overall goal and annual objectives generate more uniform progress and minimize the impact of local turnover and variations of technical assistance personnel assignments?
2. Do all external review team reports recommend teacher specialists or are there settings in which a different technical assistance strategy is recommended and/or appropriate? Does the external review team fully understand the available options and when each is appropriate?
3. Can the building blocks for sustainable change be identified and annual as well as long-range expectations made clear to school communities and technical assistance teams so that immediate and interim progress can be recognized?
4. How should the high school model differ from the elementary and middle school model?
5. Can the lines of authority and cooperation among the SDE, local district and school administrations and teacher specialists be clarified to support program implementation and sustain improvement?
6. How can local district and school administrators' support and ownership of the teacher specialist role be enhanced?
7. What is the level of annual improvement expected or the level of improvement expected across three years?
8. How can the positive relationships among teachers and teacher specialists be sustained and focused more intently upon student achievement?
9. What are local factors associated with higher levels of student performance among schools in the teacher specialist program?
10. What are the financial and instructional costs to schools and districts sending teachers to serve as teacher specialists in underperforming schools?



#### Local Capacity to Reach National Levels of Achievement

Another local issue affecting efforts to reach national levels of achievement is district organization. In an effort to understand how school district organization can and does affect student achievement and fiscal economies, the Education Oversight Committee commissioned a study on district organization by Harry Miley and Associates. The study focused on six tasks: a historical overview of school districts in South Carolina and the nation, a GIS (Geographical Information System) study of South Carolina school districts, an educational effectiveness evaluation, an organizational scale and fiscal efficiencies review, and other organizational scale issues. The study was presented in January 2003 and offered the following recommendations:

1. Undertake an immediate effort to better educate the public, legislature and educational community of the wide diversity in the environment in which students in South Carolina schools learn. This diversity suggests future state policies need to be well planned with a large degree of flexibility for different districts. It suggests that "one-size-fits-all" policies will meet with limited success across districts. Policies need to be designed with the demographic make-up of districts in mind.
2. It is apparent that poorly performing schools do not have resources to allocate to instruction and teachers' continuing education. This is evidenced by a lower percentage of teachers with advanced degrees as compared to the higher performing districts. The great disparities that exist throughout the state constitute a spatial inequality that results in a situation where a student's opportunity to achieve is directly related to where his or her parents resides. It can be argued that it is a responsibility of government to provide for social justice and attempt to level the playing field. It is also clear that the existing conditions are likely to continue in the same directions. The demographic trends in South Carolina are directly influenced by the quality of schools. The more mobile sectors of the population will continue to migrate to better performing districts and support public education. At the same time, poorly performing districts are going to continue to have declining enrollments and the local tax bases will continue to erode. There is an urgent need for the state to allocate additional state resources to poorly performing districts. These are generally from poor, low-density school districts with little local ability to generate substantial local funds (indicated by relatively low tax bases).
3. Any proposal designed to reduce operational costs through consolidation of smaller districts needs to be carefully evaluated to ensure there are no indirect impacts on performance and increased transportation costs.
4. Due to the tremendous diversity in the 85 districts and among the districts themselves, consider modifying the classification system for Report Card grades for districts. For example, the larger the district, the less meaningful a district-wide grade becomes. If a district has 30 or 40 schools and there exists a wide diversity among those schools, one district-wide grade is a relatively poor indicator of performance for all schools and all students in the district. One alternative would be to eliminate district-wide grades and focus on school-level performance. Another alternative would be to expand the grading system among like schools within a district, etc.
5. Revisit for possible reevaluation the state funding formula for districts --- especially for those districts that are poor and low-density. Factors such as density should be reviewed for inclusion in the formula funding procedure.
6. More teachers with more advanced degrees need to be attracted to the poorly performing districts. The state needs to allocate additional resources to encourage teachers with more advanced degrees to the poor, low-density districts.

7. Undertake an evaluation of the professional development and distance learning opportunities and incentives for teachers in poorly performing districts, especially for those districts that are relatively poor in terms of tax base, low densities and higher proportion of students living in poverty.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are offered to heighten the success of South Carolina's educational improvement efforts:

1. Teachers should have access to valid, reliable information and materials either from or fully aligned with the state standards-based assessments to enable them to improve student performance.
2. The EOC should support a classroom validity study to determine the degree to which classroom instruction, materials and assessments are aligned with the state's contents standards and assessments.
3. The EOC should extend the use of data in decision-making by partnering with other entities to study and/or implement performance budgeting and by supporting efforts to increase data utilization skills at the school, district and state levels.
4. The EOC should explore ways in which the findings of the district organization study can enhance the improvement of education in South Carolina.
5. The EOC should continue working with local districts and state agencies to implement technical assistance strategies that respond to local circumstances and that develop local capacity so the need for technical assistance diminishes.

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